

The bill also includes revisions to improve energy efficiency in lighting and appliances. It adopts elements of the Executive order I signed requiring Federal Agencies to lead by example in efficiency and renewable energy use.

Taken together, all these measures will help us improve our environment. It is estimated that these initiatives could reduce projected CO₂ emissions by billions of metric tons. The U.N. climate change meeting in Bali last week, our Nation promised to pursue new, quantifiable actions to reduce carbon emissions. Today we're doing just that. The legislation I'm signing today will lead to some of the largest CO₂ emission cuts in our Nation's history.

The legislation I'm about to sign should say to the American people that we can find common ground on critical issues. And there's more we can accomplish together. New technologies will bring about a new era of energy. So I appreciate the fact that Congress—in the omnibus spending bill that I'm going to sign later on—recognizes that new technologies will help usher in a better quality of life for our citizens. And so we're going to spend money on new research for alternative feedstocks for ethanol. I mean, we understand the hog growers are getting nervous because the price of corn is up. But we also believe strongly that research will enable us to use wood chips and switchgrass and biomass to be able to develop the ethanol necessary to help us realize the vision outlined in this bill.

I appreciate very much the fact that we're going to fund additional research on

new battery technologies to power plug-in hybrids. We're spending money on innovative ways to capture solar power. We're making—providing incentives for nuclear energy. If we're serious about making sure we grow our economy and deal with greenhouse gases, we have got to expand nuclear power.

It is going to take time to transition to this new era. And we're still going to need hydrocarbons. And I hope the Congress will continue to open access to domestic energy sources: certain parts of the Outer Continental Shelf, in ANWR. And to protect us against disruptions in our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

With these steps—particularly in the bill I'm about to sign—we're going to help American consumers a lot. We'll help them by diversifying our supplies, which will help lower energy prices. We'll strengthen our security by helping to break our dependence on foreign oil. We'll do our duty to future generations by addressing climate change.

And so I thank the Members of Congress. I appreciate the fact that we've worked together, that we can show what's possible in addressing the big issues facing our Nation. This is a good bill, and I'm pleased to sign it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Department of Energy. H.R. 6, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 110–140.

Remarks on Signing a Bill To Prevent Taxation of Payments From the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund to Virginia Tech Victims and Families *December 19, 2007*

It's my honor to welcome the president of Virginia Tech, the mayor of Blacksburg,

the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and of course, distinguished members

of the congressional delegation here as I sign a bill that's going to help the folks who suffered mightily on that day when a gunman killed their loved ones. It's a good piece of legislation. I appreciate members from both parties working on it.

And I asked the president how—what the spirits are like there at Virginia Tech, and he said they're strong. And I'm not surprised. Having been there for that memorial ceremony, I left with the distinct impression that of all the communities in America that could deal with a tragedy, it's the Virginia Tech community.

And so I want to say to the families who still suffer, we think about you. And

to the students and faculty and alumni and leadership of Virginia Tech, thank you for helping those who suffer reconcile and recover from the grief they feel. So it's my honor to sign this important piece of legislation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Tech University; Mayor Ron Rordam of Blacksburg, VA; and Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia. H.R. 4118, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 110–141.

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland December 19, 2007

The President. Admiral, thank you very much for your hospitality. You know, it's a great honor to come here. It's an honor to see the troops who've been wounded, and it's an honor to hug their families, and it's an honor to see the fabulous care that these folks receive. You know, our citizens wonder whether or not troops in harm's way will get superb medical care. And the answer is, absolutely, they get fantastic medical care.

Sometimes there's bureaucratic snafus that we're straightening out. But our citizens should never question whether or not the nurses and docs and caregivers are giving it their all in a professional way. They're saving lives, and they're healing hearts at the same time. And so it's a wonder what

takes place here, admiral. And I want to thank you and the colonel for taking the lead. And you know, I'm—I know Americans join me in praising our troops and honoring their families.

Merry Christmas to you.

Rear Adm. Richard R. Jeffries. Thank you, sir. It's an honor to serve them and you.

The President. Yes, sir. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:14 p.m. Participating in the visit were Rear Adm. Richard R. Jeffries, USN, commander, and Col. Leon E. Moores, USA, deputy commander for integration, National Naval Medical Center.